8. An operation cell to deal with terrorist activities has been created in Delhi Police.

9. Steps are under consideration to equip Delhi Police with more modern weapons.

Illegal acquisition of Indian Passports by Bangladeshis

*257. SHRI KAPIL VERMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Govenment's attention has been drawn to the allegation made by a Legislator of Bombay that a Large number of Bangladeshis are surreptitously acquiring Indian Passports with the connivance of unscrupluous agents and passport officials and that such Bangladeshis in large number are reaching Bombay, besides Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi; and

(b) whether Government have enquired into the matter, if so, what are the findings in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) :(a) The Government of India is not aware of any large number of Bangladeshis acquiring surreptitiously Indian Passports. There were two cases recently when passports were issued to persons who were supposedly Bangladeshi nationals. This information was already given to the Honourable House on 22nd of August (Unstarred Question No. 2650). In both these cases the Passports were subsequently revoked as soon as it come to light that there were reasons to believe that they were not Indian nationals.

(b) Central Passport Organisation, Ministry of External Affairs is concerned with the issue of travel documents to Indian nationals, whenever applications are received for issue of passports, enquiries are made from the concerned police authorities for *inter alia* the following :—

1. Identity.
2. Nationality.
3. Security.
4. whether there are any criminal charges against the individual.

Only when we receive clear reports do we issue passports ? Every effort is made to ascertain the nationality of the applicants and, therefore, only after thorough enquiries by the State Police authorities concerned all decisions are taken with regard to the issue of Passports.

Survey of forest area in the country

*258. SHRI JAGADISH JANI : MISS SAROJ KHAPARADE :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) when was the last survey on the forest area in the country made ;

(b) what is the total forest area in the country according to the last survey;

(c) whether forest area in the country has been dwindling due to large scale deforestation ;

(d) if so, the total forest area that has been degraded ; and

(e) the steps being taken to check the unabated felling of trees ?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : (a) The last comprehensive compilation of areas registered as forest was done for the year 1981-82.

(b) According to this, the total forest area in the country was 74.72 million hectares.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A reliable estimate of forest area that has been degraded is not available. Sattelite imagery for the period 1980-82 shows that forest cover in the country is 46.35 million ha.

(e) The following are some of the important steps taken by the Government to check illicit felling of trees :—

(1) Strict enforcement of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and of various other enactments to prevent unauthorised felling of trees.

(2) Elimination of the agency of contractors in the working of forests in most of the states.

(3) Creation of fuelwood reserves by undertaking massive tree plantations within and outside the forest areas.

(4) Taking up of intensive studies of the problems of grazing encroachment and shifting cultivation with a view to find long term solutions.

Request of Andhra Pradesh for Atomic Power Plant

*259. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY :
SHRI T. CHANDRASEKHAR REDDY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has demanded the location of an atomic power plant near Nagarjunasagar ;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal ; and

(c) what action the Central Government are taking in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Site Selection Committee of the Department of Atomic Energy has examined various sites including Nagarjunasagar, to assess their suitability for setting up atomic power stations in the Southern Region. The report of the committee is under consideration of the Government.

Encouragement to Sikhs to join the Canadian armed forces

†260. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the encouragement being given by Canada to the Sikhs to join its armed forces and the recent address delivered by a Canadian recruiting officer at a meeting of the World Sikh Organisation in Toronto to motivate the potential recruits and which was largely attended by proponents of Khalistan ; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) : (a) The Government of India is aware of a recruiting officer of the Canadian Armed Forces having attended a meeting arranged by the World Sikh Organisation, on 3rd November, 1985 at The Dixie Road Gurudwara, Mississauga, near Toronto.

(b) The matter was taken up with the Canadian Government who have informed us that the Canadian recruitment officer had attended the meeting under the mistaken impression that its purpose was to discuss carreer opportunities in the Canadian Armed Forces. It has been now decided that all future invitations for giving such talks will be examined in Ottawa before they can be accepted. The